

AIR WAR COLLEGE

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**THE *GLOBAL ZERO* MOVEMENT:  
A ROAD TO NOWHERE?**

by

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## **Biography**

Lieutenant Colonel Robert D. Westover is assigned to the Air War College, Air University, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama. He entered the Air Force in 1986 as a graduate of the Lehigh University Air Force ROTC program. His first active duty assignment was as a missile operations officer for the Minuteman III Intercontinental Ballistic Missile weapon system in the 320<sup>th</sup> Strategic Missile Squadron at F.E. Warren Air Force Base, Wyoming. Following his initial combat crew tour, he transitioned to the Financial Management career field. He then served as the Accounting and Finance Officer at Lajes Field Azores, Portugal and Chief, Budget Office at Holloman Air Force Base, New Mexico, before leaving the active duty Air Force in 1994 to join the Inactive Ready Reserves. After a nearly eight year break in active duty service, he again joined the active duty Air Force in 2002. He has served in a variety of financial management staff positions at the base, Major Command and Air Staff levels and was also the US Air Forces Central Command Comptroller. He graduated from Air Command and Staff College in 2007 and then served as the Commander, 90<sup>th</sup> Comptroller Squadron at F.E. Warren Air Force Base, Wyoming. He has deployed to Kuwait and served as the Assistance-in-Kind Budget Officer for the Department of Defense and then to Iraq and served as the Quick Response Funds (QRF) Program Manager for the Multi-National Security Transition Command Iraq (MNSTC-I).

## Abstract

The *Global Zero* movement has gathered momentum in the past several years as its proponents have touted that there's a clear and viable path to creating a world without nuclear weapons by 2030. This paper examines the underlying foundations of the *Global Zero* movement and analyzes whether their fundamental assumptions are valid or flawed. First, this paper explains the origins of the *Global Zero* movement starting from the 1986 Reykjavik Summit, and how the influence of former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and former Senator Sam Nunn helped shape this movement to where it is today under President Barack Obama. Second, the *Global Zero* movement is defined and its action plan will be reviewed. Third, this paper examines and analyzes four of the *Global Zero* movement's fundamental assumptions: nuclear reductions by the United States motivate other countries to do the same; the world is a safer place without nuclear weapons; nuclear weapons did not deter 9/11; and de-alerting nuclear weapons leads to heightened global security. The question of whether or not the *Global Zero* movement efforts are a useful and beneficial endeavor is ultimately answered. This analysis sets the stage for the presentation of several recommendations for the United States on how to responsibly deal with nuclear weapons. These recommendations address the following areas: nuclear weapon modernization; R&D efforts on missile defense; compliance with the New START treaty; nuclear weapon safety best practices; Iran nuclear deal follow-up, de-alerting of US nuclear weapons; and compliance with the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

## Introduction

Is a world without nuclear weapons really a safer place? This is a question that has been the subject of debate since the last nuclear weapons were detonated by the United States in 1945. On the surface, it would appear that a nuclear weapon-free world would be the desired state of utopia for all civilized nations. When President Obama spoke in Prague on April 5, 2009, he laid out the long and winding road ahead to get to *Global Zero*. He went as far to say, “This goal will not be reached quickly, perhaps not in my lifetime. It will take patience and persistence.”<sup>1</sup> The underlying foundations of the *Global Zero* movement date back to the 1980s under the Reagan era as noted on the *Global Zero* website. Can the world continue to peacefully exist with the current nuclear weapons status quo or must the existing *Global Zero* movement efforts be magnified?

The overall intention of this paper is to explain the underlying foundations of the *Global Zero* movement and determine if the fundamental assumptions anchoring this movement are valid. The first section of this paper will explain the origins of the *Global Zero* movement starting from the 1986 Reykjavik Summit, and how the influence of former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and former Senator Sam Nunn helped shape this movement to where it is today under President Barack Obama. Second, the *Global Zero* movement will be defined and their action plan will be reviewed. Third, this paper will examine and analyze the *Global Zero* movement’s main four fundamental assumptions: nuclear reductions by the United States will motivate other countries to do the same; the world is a safer place without nuclear weapons; nuclear weapons did not deter 9/11; and de-alerting nuclear weapons will lead to heightened global security. Moreover, the question of whether or not the *Global Zero* movement efforts are a useful and beneficial endeavor will be analyzed. Lastly, the answer to this crucial question

will set the stage for several recommendations on how the United States can provide leadership on how to responsibly deal with nuclear weapons in regards to nuclear weapon modernization; missile defense systems; the New START treaty; nuclear weapon safety best practices; the Iran Nuclear Deal, de-alerting of US nuclear weapons; and the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

## **Underlying Foundations of the *Global Zero* Movement**

### **Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)**

Certainly, the *Global Zero* movement rests squarely on the 1970 NPT which is the key stone of all nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation efforts. This treaty has been signed and ratified by 190 states in the world, with the notable exceptions of Israel, India, Pakistan and North Korea. The NPT acknowledges China, France, Russia, United Kingdom and the United States as NWS and all other states as Non-Nuclear Weapon States (NNWS). The treaty covers three mutually reinforcing pillars: disarmament, nonproliferation, and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and is the basis for international cooperation on stopping the spread of nuclear weapons.

### **Impact of the Reykjavik Summit (1986)**

In October 1986, President Ronald Reagan and Soviet General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev met in Reykjavik, Iceland to discuss reductions in strategic nuclear forces. There were no agreements reached at the end of this summit, however, this effort set the path for where the *Global Zero* movement is today. During this summit, both Reagan and Gorbachev made mention of eliminating all nuclear weapons during, “an increasingly testy exchange.”<sup>2</sup> As a result of the notion of eliminating nuclear weapons being brought up at this meeting, “there was a great deal of criticism in the United States and from NATO allies.”<sup>3</sup> For example, it was

difficult for US leaders like, Secretary of State George Schultz, Secretary of Defense Casper Weinberger, and National Security Advisor John Poindexter to understand why a discussion of a nuclear free world was brought up at this summit in light of world's tenuous security posture. Moreover, former President Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger went on to write, "Any leader who indulges in the Soviets' disingenuous fantasies of a nuclear-free world courts unimaginable perils."<sup>4</sup>

### **The Coming of the Four Horseman**

Interestingly enough, in October 2006, the Hoover Institute at Stanford University held a conference to mark the twentieth anniversary of the Reykjavik meeting. One of the primary organizers of this meeting was George Schultz, Reagan's Secretary of State, who was joined by former Secretary of Defense William Perry, and they helped set forth that the aim of this conference was to, "rekindle the Reagan-Gorbachev vision of a world free of nuclear weapons."<sup>5</sup> One of the results of this meeting was a Wall Street Journal article that hit the streets in January 2007. Specifically, Schultz and Perry were joined by former Secretary of State Kissinger and former Senator Sam Nunn in producing an article calling for a world free of nuclear weapons. These leaders would later become known as the "Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse".<sup>6</sup> Moreover, about two-thirds of the former living American secretaries of state, secretaries of defense, and national security advisors had given general support to the appeal of Shultz and his colleagues.<sup>7</sup>

### **Presidential Candidate, Barack Obama Supports *Global Zero***

One of those leaders was then Presidential candidate, Barack Obama, who stated in an interview, "As president, I will set a new direction in nuclear weapons policy and show the world that America believes in its existing commitment under the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty to

work to ultimately eliminate all nuclear weapons. I fully support reaffirming this goal, as called for by George Shultz, Henry Kissinger, William Perry and Sam Nunn ...”<sup>8</sup> After Obama was elected President, he joined then Russian President Dmitry Medvedev and issued an historic joint statement committing their two countries to achieving a nuclear free world in April 2009.<sup>9</sup> President Obama continued these efforts as he chaired a UN Security Council summit in September 2009 and invited the “Four Horsemen” to join him as the Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 1887, “enshrining a shared commitment to the goal of a world without nuclear weapons and setting out a framework for action.”<sup>10</sup>

### **Summary of the *Global Zero* movement**

#### **Who are they and what do they believe?**

*Global Zero* is the international movement for the elimination of nuclear weapons. It’s powered by nearly 300 international leaders and experts, and half a million citizens worldwide who support a step-by-step plan to eliminate all nuclear weapons by 2030.<sup>11</sup>

#### ***Global Zero* Action Plan**

*Global Zero* movement proponents have laid out a bold four-step action plan.<sup>12</sup> It’s primarily focused on the United States and Russia, who hold more than 90% of the world’s nuclear weapons. This action plan is centered on negotiated deep cuts in US and Russian nuclear arsenals, followed by international negotiations to eliminate all nuclear weapons by 2030.

### **Fundamental Assumptions of the *Global Zero* movement**

#### **Additional US nuclear reductions will motivate other nations to do the same.**

*Global Zero* movement proponents argue that through the United States leading the way and further reducing nuclear weapons that other countries will follow this example and do the



same. In other words, this assumption purports that the momentum and inertia for this movement will steamroll as the United States continues reducing its nuclear weapons. Further reinforcing this notion is one of the key precepts of the Obama Administration's security policy: "if the U.S. leads by example we can reassert our moral leadership and influence other nations to do things. It is the way the President intends to advance the goal of working toward a world free of nuclear weapons and to deal with the stated twin top priorities of the Administration: nuclear proliferation and nuclear terrorism."<sup>13</sup> History does not show nations are motivated in any way to take actions to reduce nuclear arsenals based on any other nation's actions. On the contrary, history shows that since the Reagan administration, four successive arms control agreements: the INF treaty<sup>14</sup>, START I<sup>15</sup>, the Moscow treaty<sup>16</sup> and New START<sup>17</sup>, have reduced the US nuclear arsenal by close to 90 percent. Yet, over that same period, China has multiplied its nuclear force, Pakistan and India have produced hundreds of nuclear weapons, and North Korea has amassed a stockpile of roughly a dozen nuclear devices.<sup>18</sup>

However, some *Global Zero* movement proponents may argue that in recent history there has been an example of a country altering their attitude towards nuclear weapons due to efforts of the United States to reduce its nuclear arsenal. Specifically, the *Global Zero* movement website states, "After years of talks, international negotiators have finally reached a deal with Iran that will stop the spread of nuclear weapons in the Middle East. This is a huge moment for the movement for a world without nuclear weapons."<sup>19</sup> As such, proponents of the *Global Zero* movement could argue that the recent Iran Nuclear Deal<sup>20</sup> came about because of groundswell of support and international backing of the movement. In their eyes, this could be chalked up as one of the first major "wins" for the *Global Zero* movement.

As the motivations for Iran coming to the table to negotiate this nuclear deal are analyzed, it's apparent that the impetus for their actions came about due to a couple of different factors seemingly more related to Iran's own self-interests than anything else. It would be too simplistic to say that this deal came about because of years of expert negotiations and talks. More importantly, with the change in Iranian leadership from President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad to Hassan Rouhani, there was a sweeping change that resulted in how Iran looked at economic sanctions and its political standing in the international community. President Rouhani took a hard look at Iran's economy, military and world status and determined that a change was needed and it could much more easily start with him as the "new guy" on the world scene. As Rupal Mehta<sup>21</sup> accurately assesses, "But through his rise to power, Rouhani has demonstrated his changing desire for nuclear weapons — or perhaps more realistically, his desire to end sanctions. That reinforces the historical evidence: New leaders have a unique opportunity to reveal their nations' preference to shift course and to reengage the international community."<sup>22</sup>

Although it's fine for the *Global Zero* movement to tout this Iran deal as a victory, the underlying lesson is not that US actions to reduce nuclear stockpiles towards zero will motivate any country to change their stance on nuclear weapons. Instead, the true lessons have more to do with the effective use of sanctions and more importantly how the United States can leverage a change in leadership even when that nation had previously taken an unacceptable stance on nuclear proliferation. Mehta highlights past historical precedence to illuminate why this occurred in Iran:

Nuclear reversal following leadership change is a more common occurrence than many people believe. Among the 27 states that have started and stopped nuclear weapons activity since 1945, 14 — including Australia, Italy, and Taiwan — changed leadership less than 12 months before beginning negotiations that permanently stopped their nuclear weapons program.<sup>23</sup>

## **Nuclear weapons weaken global stability and the world is safer without nuclear weapons**

*Global Zero* movement supporters postulate that the existence of nuclear weapons makes the world a more dangerous place and undermines global peace. One of the *Global Zero* movement's foundational documents dating back to 2012 states, "nuclear weapons have increasingly become liabilities, not assets."<sup>24</sup> Furthermore, this implies that as these "liabilities" are removed from the world stage, that security would be strengthened and the world would be a safer place. On the other hand, there has not been war between any two great powers in the world since 1945. In other words, the counter argument to this assumption above is that the presence of nuclear weapons by the world's superpowers has in fact prevented major war between its great powers. Interestingly, as recent as the 2015 National Security Strategy, President Obama exhorts, "As long as nuclear weapons exist, the United States must invest the resources necessary to maintain—without testing—a safe, secure, and effective nuclear deterrent that preserves strategic stability."<sup>25</sup> If one places this current nuclear strategy against the backdrop of the President's earlier statement that the goal of zero nuclear weapons, "will not be reached quickly, perhaps not in my lifetime,"<sup>26</sup> it's imperative for the strategic stability of the United States and its allies that the United States continues to maintain a strong nuclear deterrence posture. Maintaining strategic deterrence must be at the forefront of US strategy as nuclear weapons currently provide the United States with the most prompt and lethal strike capability on the planet against any nation or target.

US allies certainly have a say in how US nuclear weapons affect security in their regions. They will not sit back confidently and believe that reducing US nuclear stockpiles to zero will make them any safer. On the contrary, reductions in US nuclear forces will serve to cause serious security concerns throughout Europe, the Pacific region and to other areas of the

world. As Perkovich and Acton argue, “for many states, nuclear disarmament is not only about equity in an abstract sense, it is also a practical means of reducing the relative power of the US to intervene unilaterally or in small coalitions of its allies and friends around the world.”<sup>27</sup> In other words, the clear advantage that the United States has always maintained in the balance of power equation world-wide would be negated by complete nuclear disarmament to the dissatisfaction of its allies. This is an unacceptable situation if balanced up against the current security situations where Russia has flexed its military muscle in both the Ukraine and the Western Balkans.

Undoubtedly, President Obama is left with no choice but to continue to fund the US nuclear weapon programs and modernize them in order to ensure their strategic and operational viability for the future is in line with his 2015 National Security Strategy. In an odd turn of events, President Obama, who was one of the first prominent US leaders to support the *Global Zero* movement is now being criticized on the movement’s website and there’s an option for web-surfers to, “say no to \$1 Trillion in nukes”<sup>28</sup> through a letter to the President himself. The President is proposing an unprecedented \$1 trillion overhaul of the US nuclear triad over the next 30 years. The site states, “That’s money we don’t have for weapons we don’t need.”<sup>29</sup> The flawed assumption that the United States can maintain safety and security for itself and the world without nuclear weapons or modernized ones for that matter has caused the movement to mistakenly put rhetoric and idealistic prose ahead of national security.

Fortunately, the President has nested his national security actions and the nation’s precious military budget into getting the United States to a much needed, more modernized nuclear force. Even though he was one of the early proponents of the *Global Zero* movement, it could be argued here for the positive that he has put US national security interests above the

idealistic rhetoric of the movement. He has stated that he supports the movement to zero nuclear weapons but at the same time, he has managed to keep the United States and world security posture at the forefront with his decision to recommend a \$1 trillion upgrade and modernization of the US nuclear triad. On the other hand, the *Global Zero* movement can't see the sense in this effort and this is another example of its adoption of several seriously wrong-headed assumptions, positions and ideas as outlined by Peter Hussey, senior fellow for national security affairs at the American Foreign Policy Council in Washington, D.C.<sup>30</sup>

### **Nuclear weapons didn't deter 9/11**

The assumption that nuclear weapons are not useful tools for protecting the United States against today's threats underlies much of the *Global Zero* movement's efforts as it forms the bedrock to justify that nuclear weapons are archaic and ineffective for the current world environment today. From the *Global Zero*, Risk Reduction report of April 2015, "A transformational change in U.S. and Russian nuclear strategy, posture and force structure is therefore urgently needed to address squarely the security threats facing them and the world in the 21st century."<sup>31</sup> Moreover, as a corollary theme, the movement stresses that nuclear weapons must be eliminated so that they do not fall into the hands of rogue states. There's no argument that it is a good thing to keep nuclear weapons or any other weapons of mass destruction out of the hands of rogue states. However, this is a tough task. As Jeffrey Record puts it, "Because preventing rogue state acquisition of nuclear weapons is a much more difficult and risky challenge than deterring rogue state use of such weapons, and because there is no persuasive evidence that rogue states are undeterrable, the question arises of whether it would be wiser to replace the goal of prevention with that of deterrence."<sup>32</sup> Deterrence through nuclear force is still as crucial for US security today as it was in the Cold War era.

The *Global Zero* movement fails to acknowledge the current deterrent value of nuclear weapons as a military instrument of power. As the United States is faced with ever-changing security threats from both state and non-state actors, political and military leaders must have all instruments of power available to them in order to address each specific threat. Yes, the US nuclear force did not deter the September 11 terrorist attacks; however, there is still great utility in having this arsenal at the President's and National Security Council fingertips for the conflicts and security threats that will present themselves now and in the future. Colin Gray illuminates this point quite well when he says:

The United States has no practical choice other than to make of deterrence all that it can be. . . . If this view is rejected, the grim implication is that the United States, as the sheriff of world order, will require heroic performances from those policy instruments charged with cutting-edge duties on behalf of preemptive or preventive operations. Preemption or prevention have their obvious attractions as contrasted with deterrence, at least when they work. But they carry the risk of encouraging a hopeless quest for total security.<sup>33</sup>

In other words, the military instrument of power of nuclear weapons should always have a place in the conflict resolution tool kit of US political leaders. Furthermore, strategic deterrence can be a most efficacious tool when compared to military actions shrouded in either preemptive or preventative operations. Condoleezza Rice specifically addressed the current challenge of rogue states and supports Jeffrey Record's supposition that rogue states can still be deterred when she succinctly stated in 2000, "The first line of defense [in dealing with rogue states] should be a clear and classical statement of deterrence--if they do acquire WMD, their weapons will be unusable because any attempt to use them will bring national obliteration."<sup>34</sup>

### **De-alerting nuclear weapons will lead to heightened international security**

The *Global Zero* Commission on Nuclear Risk Reduction issued a bold call for ending the Cold War-era practice of keeping nuclear weapons on hair-trigger alert through a process

called de-alerting. The Commission's extensive report calls for an urgent agreement between the United States and Russia to immediately eliminate "launch-on-warning" from their operational strategy, and to initiate a phased stand down of their high-alert strategic forces, beginning with taking 20% of both countries' nuclear forces off launch-ready alert within one year and 100% within 10 years.<sup>35</sup> Specifically, de-alerting measures negate the capability to fire nuclear forces quickly and conversely require lengthy visible preparations to get them ready for launch.<sup>36</sup> For example, short of eliminating nuclear weapons entirely, the premise that a safer and more secure world will result with nuclear weapons taken off of hair-trigger alert by both the United States and Russia is assumed.

There are security issues and concerns associated with the concept of de-alerting of US nuclear forces. Specifically, there's an inherent assumption that US or Russian leaders would use nuclear weapons quickly in event of a crisis and thus, it's necessary to put a period of days in between launch decision-making and the actual launch of a nuclear weapon. As stated in the *Global Zero Risk Reduction Report* of April 2015, "The slope from a crisis to nuclear brinksmanship to escalation to the use of nuclear weapons with cascading global implications is a much too steep and slippery one."<sup>37</sup> This de-alerting construct does not help US leaders in crisis but indeed gives them less flexibility in dealing with world threats. More importantly, US leaders do not need an artificial "wedge" put into their decision making process to use the nation's most lethal weaponry when truly needed.

Second, there's a concern with "re-alerting" if both United States and Russian nuclear forces are put on a de-alerted status. For example, if leaders are faced with a national crisis and deem it necessary to use nuclear forces, how will this re-alerting ensue? Specifically, would this situation then create a race to get nuclear forces back on alert as quick as possible enabling

a preemptive strike? Moreover, this so-called de-alerting effort would only serve to exacerbate challenges in managing in crisis and as well could result in covert efforts by a nation to create an “undetectable” ability to be able to get their de-alerted nuclear forces back on alert “first” if they deemed that security situations dictated.

Third, if de-alerted nuclear forces resulted in nuclear warheads being separated from launching platforms, would this not cause a security issue? As pointed out by Dr. Kathleen Bailey, from the Reagan administration, if warheads were removed to storage, for example, they would be consolidated targets, inviting pre-emptive attack. Also, if the United States were to begin to reconstitute its nuclear forces in a period of insecurity--by reinstalling warheads, for example--it would be observable by the enemy and thus could cause crisis escalation.<sup>38</sup> In other words, the United States would lose its huge military advantage if de-alerting were to take place and the hands of its decision makers were tied in regards to the use of this military instrument of power.

Fourth, there’s an issue of verification when it comes to determining whether a nation is truly complying with a de-alerting directive and how to ensure fairness in a so-called re-alerting process. According to Thomas Karas, “it is very difficult to identify specific de-alerting measures that appear practicable when the following criteria are applied rigorously: verification ... equivalence in re-alerting capabilities.”<sup>39</sup> Without truly having a quantifiable means of ensuring compliance with stated de-alerting goals and processes, it’s an effort that will not garner any practical utility for the proponents of the *Global Zero* movement. Dr. Bailey’s simple caution is, “the lack of verifiability inherent to most de-alerting regimes is too risky.”<sup>40</sup>



## Recommendations

As the proponents of the *Global Zero* movement believe they have set a feasible way ahead for the future to get to a world state completely free of nuclear weapons, they have failed to provide a sound plan to achieve this goal. Their major assumptions in achieving their objectives are out-of-touch with the reality of the current world security environment and what is actually attainable. To make matters worse, they have forgotten the still salient lessons of how nuclear strategic deterrence has worked and is still working today to provide for the future security of the United States and the world. Instead of the United States and its partners setting their sights on a utopian or unrealistic vision such as set forth by the *Global Zero* movement, it's time to get back to the reality of dealing with a world that will include nuclear weapons for many more years. There are complex dynamics at play which involve many nations and actors who bring different security interests and perceptions of their global security environments to the table. How can the United States lead the way in this effort to responsibly deal with nuclear weapons?

- **First recommendation:** The United States must continue to fund the modernization of the entire nuclear triad and to ensure strategic deterrence and survivability. Deputy Defense Secretary Bob Work surmises, “The choice right now is modernizing or losing deterrent capability in the 2020s and 2030s. That's the stark choice we're faced with.”<sup>41</sup>
- **Second recommendation:** The United States must continue development and research to provide missile defense systems to protect the continental United States and at same time continue efforts to bolster integrated missile defense systems with overseas partners.

- **Third recommendation:** The United States and Russia must continue to comply with the new START treaty to reduce deployed nuclear warheads on each side to 1,550 by 2018. The United States must ensure Russia is held accountable and complies with the Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF). Any future cuts beyond the New START must be analyzed against the current threats and security environment. This would be extremely tenuous now considering the tensions in the Western Balkans with Russia.
- **Fourth recommendation:** The United States and Russia should lead the way in multi-lateral discussions with all other NWS to discuss proper safeguarding of these potential devastating weapons. There must be a cross-flow of information sharing that includes best practices and mutual openness to ensure all NWS leverage the latest safety technology.
- **Fifth recommendation:** In light of the recent Iran nuclear deal, the United States must continue to ensure compliance with all facets of the deal before sanctions are lifted. There must be a concerted, coordinated effort with world partners, the intelligence communities, and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to ensure continued compliance.
- **Sixth recommendation:** The United States must not adopt the concept of de-alerting its nuclear weapons. There is too much risk to the US deterrent capability. Also, Russia will not advocate for this strategy based on their current security environment and a military strategy which is aggressively nested in the theory of “de-escalation” which is defined as the concept that, “if Russia were

faced with a large-scale conventional attack that exceeded its capacity for defense, it might respond with a limited nuclear strike.”<sup>42</sup>

- **Seventh recommendation:** The United States should engage in multi-lateral discussions with all NWS to ensure that all comply with provisions of the NPT. Additionally, there must be discussions involving NWS and NNWS centered on coordinated efforts to detect nations/groups that are newly developing nuclear weapons or moving fissile material in violation of NPT. These discussions should include intelligence community, law enforcement, and IAEA as well.

## Conclusion

“Peace is our profession”. This is the well-known motto of Strategic Air Command which was disbanded on June 1, 1992. This moniker embodied the true essence of strategic deterrence and what it means for the United States in performing its function as the world’s peacekeeper. To be sure, the United States has been able to accomplish this feat on the backs of the military’s nuclear triad. Dr. Thomas Schelling, recipient of the 2005 Nobel Prize and former Harvard professor, shares some sage advice regarding the peace that the US nuclear deterrent has provided:

Except for some “rogue” threats, there is little that could disturb the quiet nuclear relations among the recognized nuclear nations. This nuclear quiet should not be traded away for a world in which a brief race to reacquire nuclear weapons could become every former nuclear state’s overriding preoccupation.<sup>43</sup>

However, many people are now arguing that the world must be free of nuclear weapons for security and peace to truly exist. This effort is currently embodied in the *Global Zero* movement which posits that a world without nuclear weapons should be the goal of every nation. This utopian state is not achievable.

The four assumptions presented in this paper are fundamentally flawed and do not give credibility to the *Global Zero* movement. Again, on the surface, a world with nuclear weapons sounds great. However, once the premises behind making this dream a reality are examined, the effort's feasibility and rationale quickly fall apart. Strategic deterrence has worked for the United States ever since the two atomic bombs were detonated on Japan in 1945, through the Cold War and until today. These assumptions fail to properly take into account particular NWS's efforts to address their own current security challenges and environments, advancing their own national interests and providing security and peace for allies. These short-sighted and over-simplistic suppositions serve to exacerbate security problems and ultimately will leave political leaders without the full complement of instruments of power and flexibility they need when faced with decisions during crises. To make matters worse, these assumptions give no credit to US decision makers and their ability to employ sound decision making processes when it comes to nuclear weapons. The recommendations outlined in the previous section give the United States areas to focus on as a future with nuclear weapons will be the reality and US leaders must be given the best opportunity to protect the nation and the world at large.

It's not enough to just engage in treaty compliance and multi-lateral discussions. It's imperative through modernization efforts that the United States ensures that only the most survivable and most advanced nuclear weapons are in the arsenal to successfully achieve strategic deterrence and ultimately provide a successful nuclear strike against the enemy if deterrence fails. Clearly enough, Russia is only serving to reinforce the importance of this continued effort as Deputy Defense Secretary Bob Work stated in June 2015 testimony to the House Armed Services Committee, "senior Russian officials continue to make irresponsible statements regarding Russia's nuclear forces, and we assess that they are doing it to intimidate

our allies and us. These have failed. If anything, they have strengthened the NATO alliance solidarity.”<sup>44</sup> Work exhorts as well that it’s not just Russia’s nuclear weapons the United States should be concerned about, “we face the hard reality that Russia and China are rapidly modernizing their already-capable nuclear arsenals, and North Korea continues to develop nuclear weapons and the means to deliver them against the continental United States.”<sup>45</sup> The United States must beware--pursuing the *Global Zero* movement will lead to a road to nowhere.



## End Notes

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<sup>1</sup> Catherine McArdle Kelleher and Judith Rippy, *Getting to Zero, The Path to Nuclear Disarmament* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011), 347.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>4</sup> Richard M. Nixon and Henry A. Kissinger, "An Arms Agreement--on Two Conditions." *The Washington Post*, 26 April 1987,  
[https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/opinions/1987/04/26/an-arms-agreement\\_on-two-conditions/ac97ee84-4702-46d3-892b-75dbbd81b14b/](https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/opinions/1987/04/26/an-arms-agreement_on-two-conditions/ac97ee84-4702-46d3-892b-75dbbd81b14b/).

<sup>5</sup> Kelleher and Rippy, *Getting to Zero*, 12.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>9</sup> Jaquest Attali et al., *Global Zero Action Plan*, February 2010,  
<http://www.globalzero.org/get-the-facts/GZAP>, 3.

<sup>10</sup> Kelleher and Rippy, *Getting to Zero*, 14.

<sup>11</sup> Global Zero Movement official Web site, "Who We Are?," <http://www.globalzero.org/our-movement/who-we-are>.

<sup>12</sup> First, the United States and Russia agree to reduce to 1,000 total warheads each by 2018. Second, through a multilateral framework, the United States and Russia reduce their nuclear arsenals to 500 total warheads each by 2021 – as other nuclear weapons countries maintain a cap on their stockpiles until 2018 and commit to proportionate reductions until 2021. Third, the world's nuclear-capable countries negotiate and sign a *Global Zero Accord*: a legally binding international agreement. Fourth, the phased, verified, proportionate dismantlement of all nuclear arsenals to zero total warheads is complete by 2030. See Attali et al., *Global Zero Action Plan*, <http://www.globalzero.org/get-the-facts/GZAP>, 3.

<sup>13</sup> Joseph Cirincione, *Nuclear Nightmares, Securing The World Before It's Too Late* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press., 2013), 148.

<sup>14</sup> Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF): 1987 agreement between United States and Soviet Union which eliminated all ground-launched US and Soviet ballistic and cruise

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missiles with ranges between 500 and 5,500 kilometers. See Corey Hinderstein, ed., *Cultivating Confidence: Verification, Monitoring, and Enforcement for a World Free of Nuclear Weapons*, (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 2010), 7.

<sup>15</sup> Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) I: 1991 agreement between Soviet Union and United States which set following limits: 1,600 strategic nuclear delivery vehicles; 6,000 warheads attributed to ICBMs, SLBMs, and heavy bombers; 4,900 warheads attributed to ICBMs and SLBMs; 1,100 warheads attributed to mobile ICBMs; 1,540 warheads attributed to heavy ICBMs. See Amy F. Woolf, "The New START Treaty: Central Limits and Key Provisions," *Congressional Research Service Report R41219*, (3 November 2015), <https://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/nuke/R41219.pdf>, 3.

<sup>16</sup> Moscow Treaty, aka Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty (SORT): 2002 agreement between United States and Russia whereby each reduces operationally deployed strategic nuclear weapons to 1,700-2,200 by end of 2012. See Stephen J. Cimbala, *The New Nuclear Disorder: Challenges to Deterrence and Strategy*, (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2015), 5.

<sup>17</sup> New START (Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty): 2010 agreement between United States and Russia whereby each must reduce to 1,550 operationally deployed warheads on intercontinental launchers and 700 deployed launchers (800 total) by 2018. See Cimbala, *The New Nuclear Disorder*, 5.

<sup>18</sup> Peter Huessy, "The Disarmament Fallacy: Eliminating All Nuclear Weapons is a Fool's Errand," *U.S. News and World Report*, 4 March 2014, <http://www.usnews.com/opinion/blogs/world-report/2014/03/04/obamas-global-zero-nuclear-policy-leaves-the-us-vulnerable>.

<sup>19</sup> Global Zero Movement official Web site, "Iran Deal," <http://www.globalzero.org/take-action/iran>.

<sup>20</sup> Iran Nuclear Deal summary: On January 16, 2016, the International Atomic Energy Agency verified that Iran has completed the necessary steps under the Iran deal that will ensure Iran's nuclear program is and remains exclusively peaceful. Before this agreement, Iran's breakout time -- or the time it would have taken for Iran to gather enough fissile material to build a weapon -- was only two to three months. Today, because of the Iran deal, it would take Iran 12 months or more. And with the unprecedented monitoring and access this deal puts in place, if Iran tries, the United States will know and sanctions will snap back into place. Since October 2015, Iran has: shipped 25,000 pounds of enriched uranium out of the country; dismantled and removed two-thirds of its centrifuges; removed the calandria from its heavy water reactor and filled it with concrete; and provided unprecedented access to its nuclear facilities and supply chain. Because Iran has completed these steps, the United States and international community can begin the next phase under the JCPOA, which means the United States will begin lifting its nuclear-related sanctions on Iran. However, a number of US sanctions authorities and designations will continue to remain in place. See The White House, "The Historic Deal that

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will Prevent Iran from Acquiring a Nuclear Weapon,”  
<https://www.whitehouse.gov/issues/foreign-policy/iran-deal>.

<sup>21</sup> Mehta is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Political Science at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and a Stanton Nuclear Security Postdoctoral Fellow at Harvard University. See Rupal Mehta, “Why did Iran make a nuclear deal now?,” *Washington Post*, 17 July 2015, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/monkey-cage/wp/2015/07/17/why-did-iran-make-a-nuclear-deal-now>.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> These leaders use their new positions in government to reveal their countries’ desire to end their nuclear weapons program in exchange for whatever rewards the international community was offering at the time. Many of these countries received significant increases in military assistance from the United States immediately after publicly deciding to stop a nuclear weapons program. See Mehta, “Why did Iran,” *Washington Post*.

<sup>24</sup> James E. Cartwright et al., *Global Zero U.S. Nuclear Policy Commission Report*, May 2012, <http://www.globalzero.org/get-the-facts/us-nuclear-strategy>, 3.

<sup>25</sup> Barack Obama, “National Security Strategy,” 2015, [https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/2015\\_national\\_security\\_strategy.pdf](https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/2015_national_security_strategy.pdf), 11.

<sup>26</sup> Kelleher and Rippey, *Getting to Zero*, 347.

<sup>27</sup> George Perkovich and James M. Acton, eds., *Abolishing Nuclear Weapons Debate*. (Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 13 February 2009), <http://carnegieendowment.org/2009/02/13/abolishing-nuclear-weapons-debate>, 122.

<sup>28</sup> Global Zero Movement official Web site, “\$1 Trillion Budget,” <http://globalzero.org/take-action/budget>.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Huessy, “The Disarmament Fallacy.”

<sup>31</sup> James E. Cartwright et al., *Global Zero on Nuclear Policy Risk Reduction*, April 2015, <http://www.globalzero.org/get-the-facts/nuclear-risk-reduction>, 2.

<sup>32</sup> Jeffrey Record, “Bounding the Global War on Terrorism,” *U.S. Army War College Strategic Studies Institute* (December 2003): 33, <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdf/PUB207.pdf>.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 42.



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<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Cartwright, et al., *Global Zero on Nuclear Policy*, 7.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>38</sup> Kathleen Bailey, "De-alerting Nukes Would Imperil US Security," *Wall Street Journal*, 20 January 1998, <http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB885244885610728000>.

<sup>39</sup> Thomas H. Karas, "De-alerting and De-activating Strategic Nuclear Weapons," (Albuquerque, NM: *Sandia National Labs Report*, April 2001), <http://prod.sandia.gov/techlib/access-control.cgi/2001/010835.pdf>, 8.

<sup>40</sup> Bailey, "De-alerting Nukes."

<sup>41</sup> Cheryl Pellerin, "Work: Strong Nuclear Deterrence is Critical to National Security," *Defense.gov*, 25 June 2015, <http://www.defense.gov/News-Article-View/Article/604900>.

<sup>42</sup> Nikolai N. Sokov, "Why Russia Calls a Limited Nuclear Strike "De-escalation," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, 13 March 2014, <http://thebulletin.org/why-russia-calls-limited-nuclear-strike-de-escalation>.

<sup>43</sup> Thomas C. Schelling, "A World Without Nuclear Weapons." *Daedalus, Journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences* 138, no. 4 (Fall 2009), 124, <https://www.amacad.org/content/publications/pubContent.aspx?d=945>.

<sup>44</sup> Pellerin, "Work: Strong Nuclear Deterrence."

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

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